

Summary: Former Navajo Nation Borrego Pass Grant School Board President Embezzled School Funds

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Report Number: 16-0702

The OIG investigated allegations that Fernie Yazzie, former board president of the Navajo Nation's Borrego Pass Grant School (BPGS), embezzled school funds by making personal purchases with his school-issued debit card.

We substantiated the allegations of theft. Yazzie admitted that, between 2015 and 2016, he used his school-issued debit card to make personal purchases totaling approximately \$53,000. These purchases included meals, movie tickets, domestic items, and numerous gift cards.

On December 21, 2020, Yazzie pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court for the District of New Mexico to one count in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1163, "Embezzlement and theft from Indian tribal organizations." On May 12, 2021, the court sentenced Yazzie to 5 months of incarceration, 2 years of supervised release, and 5 months of home detention with radio frequency monitoring. The court also ordered him to pay \$53,000 in restitution plus a \$100 assessment.

This is a summary of an investigative report we issued to the BIE Director.

